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Remarks:

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the Examiner's confirmation of receipt of Applicants' claim for priority and certified priority document under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 11 - 20 are presently pending in the application. Claims 1 - 10 were previously canceled. As it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their previously presented form, the claims have not been amended to overcome the references.

In item 3 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 11 - 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U. S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0044816 to Hooker et al ("**HOOKE**R"), in view of U. S. Patent Application Publication No 2002/0124081 to Primm et al ("**PRIMM**"), and further in view of U. S. Patent Application Publication No 2002/0188759 to Roy et al ("**ROY**").

Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejections.

More particularly, claim 11 recites, among other limitations:

A method for determining an interruption of a
communication connection between a domestic appliance

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

connected in a local area network to which further domestic appliances are connected, to a bus line configuration having a bus line controller, [emphasis added by Applicants]

Similarly, Applicants' claim 16 recites, among other limitations:

A device for determining an interruption of a communication connection between a domestic appliance connected in a local area network to which further domestic appliances are connected, [emphasis added by Applicants]

As claimed, the instant invention determines an interruption of a communication connection between a domestic appliance and the bus line controller of a local area network to which further domestic appliances are connected. This can be seen, for example, in paragraph [0004] of the instant application, which states:

It is thus the object of the invention to provide a way whereby in a method and a device of the type specified initially, an interruption of a communication connection between a domestic appliance which is connected to a bus line arrangement comprising a bus line controller in a local area network, and the relevant bus line controller can be determined and in addition, transmissions of information from and to the relevant domestic appliance can be resumed when the communication connection is re-established after the relevant interruption in a simple manner and with a particularly low loading of the local area network and the bus line arrangement pertaining thereto. [emphasis added by Applicants]

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

However, the prior art cited in the Office Action fails to teach or suggest, among other limitations of Applicants' claims, determining an interruption of a communication connection between a domestic appliance and the bus line controller of a local area network to which further domestic appliances are connected. More particularly, pages 2 and 6 of the Office Action point to paragraphs [0065] - [0066] as allegedly disclosing a method and device for determining an interruption of a communication connection between a domestic appliance and the bus line controller of a local area network. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Rather, the HOOKER reference discloses using an external host controller to execute appliance diagnostic functions. See, for example, paragraph [0065] of HOOKER, which states:

Using method 500 and the serial bus communications protocol, appliance 102 can be monitored and controlled from external host controller 114. Control parameters and algorithms may be updated or modified using external host controller 104, and appliance diagnostic functions may be executed. [emphasis added by Applicants]

However, it is important to the operation of HOOKER that this connection between the external host controller 114 of HOOKER and the appliance 102 of HOOKER not be interrupted. Thus, although HOOKER discloses the automatic detection of appliances connected to the external host controller 114,

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

HOOKER fails to teach or suggest, among other limitations of Applicants' claims, detecting an interruption of a communications connection between a domestic appliance and the bus line controller of a local area network.

Additionally, as acknowledged on page 3 of the Office Action:

Hooker does not explicitly teach wherein the step of transmitting a reply signal from the domestic appliance to the bus line controller location if the communication exists between the domestic appliance and the bus line controller, *an absence of the reply signal being interpreted as an interruption of the communication connection with the domestic appliance.* [emphasis in the original]

Rather, pages 3 - 4 of the Office Action rely on the **PRIMM** reference for supplementing the deficiencies of **HOOKE**R. Applicants' respectfully disagree.

Citing paragraph [0061] of **PRIMM**, the Office Action states, in part, that **PRIMM** discloses a device transmitting a "ping" signal, wherein not receiving the expected ping is interpreted as a failure of the communication connection. Applicants respectfully disagree that the "ping" signal of **PRIMM**, and the **absence thereof**, can be properly analogized to the language of Applicants' claims. More particularly, Applicants' claim 11 requires, among other limitations:

repeatedly requesting a specific fixed criterion of the domestic appliance over time by the bus line

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

controller if the information includes change information on the appliance status;

transmitting a reply signal from the domestic appliance to the bus line controller if the communication connection exists between the domestic appliance and the bus line controller, an absence of the reply signal being interpreted as an interruption of the communication connection with the domestic appliance resulting in a performance of a search operation for the domestic appliance, [emphasis added by Applicants]

Applicants' independent claim 16 recites similar limitations, among others.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, **PRIMM** discloses that if a peer appliance does not receive a ping it is expecting from a network appliance, the peer appliance establishes that the pinging appliance is inoperable. This can be seen from paragraph [0061] of **PRIMM**, pointed to in the Office Action, which states:

In one exemplary embodiment, a network appliance will periodically ping a peer appliance. If the peer appliance does not receive an expected ping, it may establish that the pinging appliance is inoperable. In this manner, failure of an appliance may be quickly detected.

This operation of **PRIMM** is directly contrary to Applicants' claimed invention. In Applicants' claimed invention, the bus controller requests a reply from a domestic appliance. If there is no reply from the domestic appliance, the bus line controller interprets the missing reply as an interruption of

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

the communication connection. The failure of a device to **reply** to a request, as in Applicants' claimed invention, is **different** than the failure of a device to **receive** an expected ping, as in **PRIMM**. A reply to a request is not the same as a ping. Rather, in **PRIMM**, a ping is sent out periodically **without there having been a request for it.**

As such, contrary to the allegation made in the Office Action, **PRIMM** does not cure the acknowledged deficiencies of the **HOOKER** reference. Nor does the **ROY** reference, also cited in the Office Action. Thus, **HOOKER**, **ROY** and **PRIMM**, all **fail** to teach or suggest, among other limitations of Applicants' claimed invention, **the absence of a reply signal** to a repeatedly requested specific fixed criterion of the domestic appliance over time, being interpreted by a bus line controller as an interruption of the communication connection. Applicants' claims are, therefore, patentable over **HOOKER**, **ROY** and **PRIMM**, whether taken alone, or in combination.

Further, page 4 of the Office Action acknowledges that the combination of **HOOKER** and **PRIMM** also fails to disclose, among other limitations of Applicants' claims, the absence of the reply signal initiating Applicants' particularly claimed search operation, stating:

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

The combined teachings of Hooker and Primm do not explicitly teach wherein the absence of a reply signal results in a performance of a search operation for the domestic appliance, the search operation including the steps of: transmitting a general interrogation signal from the bus line controller to the domestic appliance until the reply signal is received from the domestic appliance again; and subsequently transmitting further information corresponding to a then valid current status of the domestic appliance to the bus line controller. [emphasis added by Applicants]

Rather, pages 4 and 5 of the Office Action go on to point to ROY as allegedly disclosing performing a search operation for a domestic appliance, as claimed by Applicants. Applicants respectfully disagree.

More particularly, Applicants' claim 16 recites, among other limitations:

transmitting a reply signal from the domestic appliance to the bus line controller if the communication connection exists between the domestic appliance and the bus line controller, an absence of the reply signal being interpreted as an interruption of the communication connection with the domestic appliance resulting in a performance of a search operation for the domestic appliance, the search operation including the steps of:

transmitting a general interrogation signal from the bus line controller to the domestic appliance until the reply signal is received from the domestic appliance again; and

subsequently transmitting further information corresponding to a then valid current status of the domestic appliance to the bus line controller.
[emphasis added by Applicants]

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

Similarly, Applicants' independent claim 16 recites, among other limitations:

said bus line controller containing an evaluation device configured such that, in an absence of the reply signal, said evaluation device providing a message signal indicating an interruption of the communication connection to the domestic appliance, and said bus line controller being constructed so that in response to the message signal, said bus line controller carries out a search operation for the domestic appliance wherein a general interrogation signal is transmitted until the reply signal is obtained from the domestic appliance again, and said bus line controller is further constructed such that said bus line controller then allows information corresponding to a then valid current appliance status to be received. [emphasis added by Applicants]

As such, Applicants' claims require, among other limitations, that the search operation be carried out until a reply signal is again obtained from the domestic appliance. The ROY reference fails to teach or suggest, among other limitations of Applicants' claims, conducting a search operation until a reply signal is again obtained from the domestic appliance.

Rather, paragraph [0012] of ROY states:

Then a device location protocol (DLP) over UDP broadcast request is sent out that includes a list of devices, such as printers, that have responded. The request is that only devices not on the list respond. Responses are then parsed and the responding device's network address is added to the list of responding devices. This process is repeated until there are no more responses. [emphasis added by Applicants]

As such, ROY discloses broadcasting a request including a list of responding devices, so that devices not on the list will

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

respond. ROY specifically teaches updating the list to include responding devices and re-broadcasting the list until there are no more responses. See, for example, paragraph [0012] of ROY. Applicants' claimed invention does not stop searching once "there are no more responses", as taught in ROY. Rather, Applicants' claims require, among other limitations, that the search operation be carried out until a reply signal is again obtained from the domestic appliance, which is neither taught, nor suggested, by ROY.

As such, HOOKER, PRIMM and ROY all fail to teach or suggest, among other limitations of Applicants' claims, conducting a search operation until a reply signal is again obtained from the domestic appliance, as required by Applicants' claims.

For the foregoing reasons, among others, Applicants' claims are believed to be patentable over HOOKER, ROY and PRIMM, whether taken alone, or in combination.

It is accordingly believed that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, teach or suggest the features of claims 11 and 16. Claims 11 and 16 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claims 11 or 16.

Applic. No. 10/579,950
Response Dated June 30, 2008
Responsive to Office Action of March 31, 2008

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 11 - 20 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Sterner LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



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